Approved For Release 2009/02/09 : CIA-RDP04-00312R001001810009-4

Terpil

JACK ANDERSON — WASHINGTON POST — 10/20/80

Billy's Mercenary Connection

One of the biggest bombshells in the Billy Carter case lies ticking but unexploded in the classified files of the Justice Department. Locked in these files is evidence that President Carter's foot-loose "brother," perhaps innocently, became cozy in Libya with the leader of a ring of American mercenaries—specialists in murder and mayhem who learned their skills in the CIA and military special forces.

These violent men, some of the toughest and meanest ever to come out of America's clandestine operations, have been collaborating with Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi's worldwide terrorist movement. They have supplied the terrorists with infernal murder devices and have trained them in the dark arts.

The startling details have been swept under the secrecy stamp, ostensibly because they would expose CIA and military secrets, but possibly because the information would embarrass the White House.

The ringleader of the mercenaries is Frank Edward Terpil, a stocky, mustachioed CIA ex-agent who owns a home close to CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., and whose wife once worked for the CIA. He allegedly has supplied weaponry and explosives, including booby traps disguised as ashtrays, lamps, alarm clocks, flower vases, radios and books, to world terrorists.

One of his associates, Edwin Paul Wilson, a big bulldozer of a man who could pass for John Wayne in a dim cafe, is quoted in the secret files as explaining: "You know, the colonel [Qaddafi] may some time have some young colonels or some officers who are getting out of line that he wants to send a present to."

The rugged Wilson, who also has a background as an intelligence officer for the CIA and the Navy, allegedly tried to recruit an assassin to eliminate one of Qaddafi's enemies in Egypt for a $1 million fee.

According to the secret files, Terpil and Wilson have recruited at least 10 U.S. special forces veterans who are described as "trained assassins." But, given the skill of these clandestine operatives to conceal their identities, the number is probably greater. Seven U.S. explosives experts and two men trained to make sophisticated CIA weapons have also been brought to Libya by Terpil and Wilson.

The two ringleaders have been indicted for gun-running, and are on the lam. Intelligence sources say Wilson is hiding out in a Tripoli hotel just down the hall from the notorious international terrorist Carlos the Jackal. Terpil was last reported in Syria, which has just joined in a political union with Qaddafi's Libya.

Billy Carter was once in touch with the notorious Terpil, though the connection may be entirely innocent. He told Justice Department officials that he had discussed a machine-gun deal with Terpil. Another time, Billy Carter said Terpil has acted as an interpreter for him in Libya, though Terpil knows no foreign languages. Billy also said he might have signed a photograph showing himself and Terpil together in Libya, "To my friend, Frank."

But later, Billy Carter recanted, and insisted he hardly knows the man. He said:

My associate Dale Van Atta has reviewed the classified Justice Department files, which are drawn from grand jury transcripts and investigator's reports. The FBI, Customs Bureau, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and two federal grand juries have been working on the case for two years. If only a fraction of the allegations can be proved in court, it will be one of the most incendiary political-military-intelligence scandals of the decade.

This secret conclusion from Justice Departments files summarizes the case: "The United States, in effect, has become a worldwide supplier of hardware and technology in support of worldwide terrorism. Former CIA personnel, military special forces and U.S. corporations combine to supply products and expertise to whoever can pay the price."

Footnote: Sources close to the investigation claim that the prosecutors, fearful of burning their fingers, have been handling the case as if it were radioactive. But the grand jury prosecutor insisted that his office is pursuing the investigation vigorously.

Approved For Release 2009/02/09 : CIA-RDP04-00312R001001810009-4